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## THE HELLENIZATION OF THE JEWS BETWEEN 334 B. C. AND 70 A. D.

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The period of Jewish history extending from Alexander the Great to Jesus is one for which our sources of information are fragmentary, especially as regards the contact of Jew and Greek. This fact is all the more regrettable because the impact of Greek civilization on the Jews which then took place gave to the period an importance that almost ranks it with the period of the great prophets, or with that of Moses and the beginnings of the Hebrew state.

An attempt will be made to present in this article the sifted testimony of the ancient sources<sup>1</sup> regarding the hellenization of the Jews prior to the composition of the New Testament.

Athens and Jerusalem are less than eight hundred miles apart, and the old Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor, the home of so many of the celebrated Greek philosophers, historians, and poets, are considerably nearer to the capital of the Holy Land. When did the peoples whom these cities represent look first in each other's faces and exchange thoughts on the problems of life? It seems strange in this day that the horizons of Homer and Isaiah did not overlap, that no echo of the Greek poet was heard among the heights of Judah, and that the teaching of the Hebrew prophet was not carried to the coast of Asia Minor and to the islands of the Aegean. Yet more strange does it appear to us in this modern age, when every part of the earth is molding every other part, that men like Ezra, the founder of the religion of Jewish law, and Nehemiah the patriot, and Malachi the prophet, all of whom were associated in a great historical movement the influence of which was to be felt for centuries, and other men, their contemporaries and neighbors, like Anaxagoras of Clazomenae and Socrates, Pericles and the tragic poets, Sophocles and Euripides, should have lived their lives and done their work without knowledge one of the other. But such appears

<sup>1</sup> A list of the sources used will be found at the end of the article.

to have been the case. Even Herodotus, another contemporary of Ezra, who had traveled as far east as Babylon and Susa, and as far south as Elephantiné on the confines of Ethiopia, seems never even to have heard of Jerusalem, though it possessed more in which, as one might suppose, he would have been interested than any of the cities of Asia Minor to which he devoted so much careful study. It is doubtful whether he had any knowledge whatever of the Jewish nation, for his reference to "the Syrians of Palestine" who practiced circumcision may point to the Philistines rather than to the Jews. It is practically certain that the great heroic past of the people of Israel was all unknown to him. Yet Herodotus might have become acquainted with Jewish history in the East, for thither thousands of Jews had been deported, first by the Assyrian kings at the close of the eighth century before Christ, and then by the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar in 597, 586, and 582 B. C.; and there can be little doubt that he might also have gained most interesting material for his history in Egypt, for Jeremiah speaks of a Jewish settlement there in his time, a full century before the birth of the "father of history." But though he might thus have become acquainted with the Jewish nation without ascending to the highland of Judea, to a people who "dwelt apart," for some unknown reason he seems never to have done so, at least in a thorough manner, for otherwise he would not have been utterly silent regarding them.

It is true, Herodotus does not mention Rome in his great work, yet this is less to be wondered at than his silence regarding the Jews, for Roman history had but just begun in his day, while the Hebrew nation had done valiant deeds for a thousand years.

We must come down nearly a century beyond the death of Herodotus before we discover any clear trace of influential contact between Greeks and Jews. The story of a meeting between Aristotle and an unnamed Judean on the coast of Asia Minor—a story derived from a book on *Sleep* by Clearchus of Soli, a pupil of Aristotle, may appropriately be called a dream. For Clearchus represents Aristotle as giving substantially the following account: that he met a Jew from Coelesyria who had become a Greek not only in his language but also in his spirit, that this man had been hospitably entertained by many in the "upper country," that is, in the interior of Asia Minor,

that he conversed with various philosophers and with him, making trial of their skill and communicating to them somewhat more than he received. Josephus, who appears to have taken this interesting fiction directly from the book of Clearchus, adds that Aristotle discoursed particularly of the simple and serene life of this remarkable Jew. But the story has only this historical value, that it witnesses to the extreme regard entertained by the Greeks at this time for the far-away and mysterious East. Clearchus evidently knew nothing definite of the Jews, for he supposed the word "Judean" to be the designation of a class or family of philosophers who were descended from those of India. It is possible indeed that a Jew of the fourth century before Christ may have become a Greek "not only in language but also in spirit;" it is not credible however that there was a Jew at that time who, in philosophy, was qualified to communicate to Aristotle and to other Greek philosophers somewhat more than he received from them.

There is then in the ancient writings nothing to indicate that, prior to the time of Alexander, the Jew had begun to be influenced by the Greek. He had been at school in Egypt a thousand years before Alexander's day, he had come into close contact with the civilization of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia in the preceding four centuries, but the golden age of the Greek spirit—the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ—passed before he began really to know this people of the West, whose dominion over the future was to be second only to his own. And when this acquaintance at last began, it was not of his own choosing. The Jews who returned from Babylon in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra wished to be henceforth by themselves. A hedge of ordinances designed to keep them from all contact with other peoples speedily grew up around them. They had lost indeed their political independence, but all the more did the scribes, and at a later day the Pharisees also, labor to preserve them uncontaminated by the gentiles round about. This religious seclusion, practiced in the belief that they alone possessed the oracles of God and that the gentiles had nothing of profit for them, may account in a measure for the fact that their acquaintance with the Greeks was postponed until the Macedonian conqueror sowed the world from the Hellespont and Nile to the Indus with the seeds of Greek civili-

zation, and began that work of breaking down the barrier between Greeks and barbarians, which, in a spiritual sense, was completed centuries late by the peaceful gospel of Jesus.

It is therefore from Alexander and his decade of beneficent conquest (334-324 B. C.) that we date the beginning of that hellenization of the Jews which was one day to bring Greek elements into the sacred writings of Christianity. In this process of assimilation of Greek culture and philosophy by the Jews there were two external facts of primary importance. First, there was the invasion of Palestine by Greek settlers, and second, the dispersion of the Jews throughout the Greek world. These movements we shall now consider.

The coming of Greeks into Palestine in any considerable number was subsequent to Alexander's conquest of the land. After the capture of Tyre he went down the coast to Gaza, and thence probably to Egypt. Whether on his return he went up into the interior is uncertain. The remarkable tale that Josephus tells, lacking any support in the Greek or Latin historians, how Alexander on approaching Jerusalem recognized in Jaddua, the high-priest who came out in state to greet him, the very one who had appeared to him in a dream while yet in Macedonia, saying that he would give him the dominion over the Persians, and how he sacrificed to Jehovah in the temple, how also the Book of Daniel was shown to him, wherein it is announced that a Greek should destroy the empire of the Persians—this tale, in which the Book of Daniel figures one hundred and fifty years before it was composed, in which also Alexander, who may never have heard the name of the Jews, confesses that he had seen the Jewish high-priest in a dream and that, moved by his exhortation, he had undertaken his campaign through Asia, is obviously unhistorical—a pious Jew's attempt to glorify his people. But though Alexander himself may have touched only the border of Palestine, his general Perdikkas seems to have planted a Macedonian colony in the ancient city of Samaria. As this city was overthrown by Demetrius within a generation, the colony may then have disappeared entirely. But nevertheless a permanent Greek invasion of the land had begun. It is impossible to trace the course of this invasion accurately from generation to generation, and yet we are not without valuable information on the subject.

In the third century before Christ, when Palestine was under the rule of the Ptolemies, it is believed that the Old Testament, or at least the greater part of it, was translated into Greek in Alexandria. Who the translators were we do not know. We should naturally expect that they were Jews of Alexandria. But the *Letter of Aristeas*, if with Schürer we may date it as early as 200 B. C., throws an interesting light on our present subject, for in representing the seventy-two translators as Palestinian Jews it assumes that there were many Jews in Palestine in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus (283-247 B. C.) who were well acquainted with the Greek tongue. If this was indeed the case, even at the time of Aristeas, then the Greek language could probably have been studied in Jerusalem in those days, and we should have to infer a rapid progress of Greek civilization in the land since the death of Alexander.

More trustworthy for this early period is an inference which we may draw from the Greek historian Hecataeus of Abdera. This writer, who may well have been one of the company of learned men who went with Alexander on his campaign, was with Ptolemy Lagus at the battle of Gaza in 312 B. C., and may have visited Jerusalem at this time. According to Josephus he was acquainted in Egypt with a Palestinian Jew by the name of Hezekiah who was thoroughly familiar with the history and affairs of his own nation. Now Hecataeus says that through contact with Persians and *Macedonians* many Jewish customs had been changed. This refers of course to the Jews of Palestine, and implies that, when Hecataeus wrote, the influence of the Macedonians had made itself felt. This is most easily understood if we suppose that, in addition to the Greek rule over the country, there was also an appreciable Greek element in the population of some of the larger cities.

When we descend to the next century, to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B. C.), we find more numerous evidences of the presence of a Greek element in Palestine—not merely of a leaning toward Greek customs and an acquaintance with Greek civilization, which would not of themselves necessarily imply the immediate presence of Greeks. Thus, in the first place, we learn that when Antiochus, at the request of the high-priest Jason and his party, granted the erection of a gymnasium in Jerusalem under the shadow

of the tower of David, the Jews who frequented it hid their circumcision that they might appear to be Greeks, which seems plainly to argue that Greeks also visited the same place. About this time, when the feast of Bacchus was celebrated, the Jews were compelled to deck themselves with ivy and march in the procession; and in the same source mention is made of "Greek cities" round about Jerusalem, that is, in Judea. If there were towns in Judea which were predominantly Greek, we can understand how the feast of Bacchus might be celebrated in Jerusalem, and why the Jews who frequented the gymnasium wished to conceal the mark of their nationality. In this connection reference should be made to the Book of Daniel, which was probably written in Palestine in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Its mention of Greek instruments of music (*κίθαρς, συμφωνία, ψαλτήριον*) may reasonably be held to show that these instruments were in use among the Jews, and this in turn implies that Greek merchants had introduced them into Palestine, or that the Jews had seen them in use among the Greeks who dwelt with them.

How completely the northern part of Palestine was dominated by Greeks in the second century appears from a number of facts in the history of the Hasmonean rulers. Thus it is represented in First Maccabees that Simon (before 161 B. C.) brought back with him from Galilee the Jews who dwelt there, to save them from their enemies. This implies that their number cannot have been very large. Again, at the close of the century it required all the power of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B. C.) to conquer Asochis in Galilee, and the neighboring cities of Gadara, Pella, and Dium on the east of the Jordan. The population of these cities and of others in northern Palestine was doubtless no less Syrian than Greek, but the type of civilization was essentially hellenistic.

With the beginning of Roman rule in Palestine (63 B. C.) there came at once a notable expansion of hellenism, for Pompey restored those cities which had been reduced by the Hasmoneans and put them under the prefect of Syria. The cities of the Philistine coast, Gaza and Ashdod, Anthedon and Raphia, and farther north such cities as Joppa and Jamnia, Strato's Tower and Apollonia, and Dora by Mt. Carmel; Scythopolis at the south end of the Lake of Galilee, Hippos and Pella, Gamala and Gadara on the east side, and Samaria

in the center of the land, together with many others, were now repopulated, either by their former inhabitants, or by these and such others as welcomed a residence in towns which had formerly been predominantly non-Jewish. Of the five cities which Pompey made the political centers of the entire Palestinian region, two, Gadara and Amathus, were thoroughly Greek, and Sepphoris in Galilee was doubtless strongly Gentile in its composition. The others were Jericho and Jerusalem.

The expansion of hellenism in Palestine, which was thus favored at the beginning of the Roman period was steadily promoted by the Herods, dependent as they were for their power on the favor of the emperors. Next to Augustus himself, of whom Philo said in somewhat exaggerated terms that he increased Greece by many Greeces and hellenized all the most important divisions of the barbarians, Herod the Great was the most notable promoter of the purely material side of Greek civilization. He cared no more for the worship of Jehovah, to whom he built a temple in Jerusalem, than he did for that of Apollo, the restoration of whose temple at Rhodes is said by Josephus to have been his greatest and most illustrious work. He built temples to Caesar at Caesarea, Samaria, and Paneion, and, what was of still wider and deeper popular influence, he promoted throughout his kingdom all those forms of amusement which constituted so conspicuous a feature of Graeco-Roman life. We learn from the Jewish historian, usually in an incidental manner, of hippodromes, theaters, and amphitheaters, even in Jerusalem itself, which he constructed at great expense; of royal prizes which he offered to attract from all nations those most skilled in public games and races; and of the lavish manner in which on great occasions, as at the completion of the city of Caesarea and at the reception given to Marcus Agrippa, he carried out the popular shows. His successor shared his spirit, but not his ability and wealth. It may be mentioned in passing that Herod always had Greeks about him, as Nicolas of Damascus and Eurycles the Spartan.

This sketch of the presence of Greeks in Palestine may be completed with a reference to certain facts in the lifetime of Jesus. Thus it is noticeable, in the first place, that Jesus seems never to have visited the coast region of Palestine where, as at Joppa and Jamnia, doubt-



less also at Ptolemais, there was certainly a Jewish population; that, as far as our records inform us, he never preached in Tiberias or Tarichaeae, which were probably the largest towns on the Lake of Galilee, or at Scythopolis, or any of the cities on the east of the lake, as Pella and Hippos and Gadara, or at Seleucia on Lake Merom, or in Sepphoris, the largest city in Galilee and only a few miles from Nazareth. That no one of these cities is mentioned in the story of his life is an indication that they were largely non-Jewish. He who felt that he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel kept aloof from them.

Again, the presence of a considerable element of Greek-speaking people in Palestine in the time of Jesus is to be inferred from the widespread acquaintance of Palestinian Jews with the Greek tongue. A number of facts appear to justify this statement. Thus the coins of the Herods bore Greek inscriptions, which seems to imply that the people who used those coins had at least a little knowledge of Greek. Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, and Jesus, a carpenter of Nazareth, conversed with the Roman Pilate, apparently without an interpreter, and if so, it must have been in Greek, for it is utterly improbable that Pilate knew Aramaic. Peter, a fisherman of Bethsaida in Galilee, Mark, a Jew of Jerusalem, James and Jude, who were possibly the authors of the letters which bear those names, all wrote Greek, if not in the lifetime of Jesus, at least in subsequent years. Two other facts may be mentioned here though they belong to the latter half of the first century. When Paul spoke from the stairs of Antonia to the multitude who wished to kill him, it is said that they were the more quiet when they perceived that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language. This implies that they were somewhat surprised, and had expected that he would speak Greek. Apparently then the common people of Jerusalem were able to understand a Greek speech. Again, when Titus, at the siege of Jerusalem, wished to speak to the Jews as persuasively as possible that he might lead them to surrender the city and thus save it from destruction, he sent Josephus to talk with them in their own Aramaic tongue. This course was evidently not dictated by necessity: the Jerusalemites could have understood a summons in Greek. It was couched in Aramaic and spoken by a Jew in the

thought that it might thus be more effectual, being more widely and better understood.

Thus far we have spoken of the presence of the Greek in the land of the Jews as an agent in their hellenization. And it should be added in conclusion on this point that the smallness of Palestine is not to be overlooked. If we remember that it is approximately the size of the state of Vermont, and if in thought we transfer its ancient population to this state; if then we have a line of Greek cities down the east shore of Lake Champlain and Lake George, others equally flourishing along the Connecticut River against the northern half of the state, with a number of Greek cities in the interior; if moreover at the capital among the mountains, to which a large part of the population journeys three times a year, we have a Greek theater and amphitheater, Greek baths and Greek festivals; and if, in addition to all this, we have Greek civilization spread over Canada, Greek cities and Greek gods in New Hampshire, and a great Greek center in the south, a composite of Boston and New York, all of which regions and cities are constantly represented in Vermont along many channels of commerce and travel, we shall then appreciate the situation of the Jews of Palestine in relation to the Greeks in the time of Jesus.

Yet more important for the hellenization of the Jews before the New Testament era than the presence of Greeks in the land of the Jews, of which we have spoken, was the scattering of the Jews through the various lands which from the time of Alexander had come more and more under the sway of Greek civilization. To this subject we must give careful attention if we are to understand the extent and depth of the impress of Greek civilization upon the Jewish people.

The extent of the Jewish dispersion is in general clear from the ancient writings, and a brief statement of the facts will suffice. We have no definite knowledge of permanent Jewish settlements outside of Palestine prior to Alexander the Great—settlements which continued down to the Christian era, with the single exception of that in the East which was concentrated chiefly along the Tigris and Euphrates. How extensive this was we may infer both from the size of the deportations from Palestine in the eighth and sixth centuries and from a variety of facts of which the following may be noted as the chief: Hecataeus the Greek historian wrote—if we may in this

point trust Josephus—that many myriads of Babylonian Jews were removed after Alexander's death, into Egypt and Phoenicia, to give stability to the political state of those regions; Antiochus the Great (224–187 B. C.) is said to have transplanted 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon to central Asia Minor; Zamaris, a Babylonian Jew, with five hundred horsemen, was invited by Herod the Great to occupy Trachonitis, a region east of Galilee, and to overcome the robber bands infesting the region; in the time of Artabanus III (12–40 A. D.) two Jews of Nehardea on the Euphrates made themselves leaders of a band of freebooters which at length attained such proportions that it was recognized by Artabanus and by the Babylonians, and at a later time was able to defeat Mithradates the son-in-law of Artabanus; in the story of Pentecost we are told that there were men in Jerusalem from Parthia, Media, Elymais, and Mesopotamia, whom we are doubtless to regard as, in the main at least, descended from the original colony; and finally, the extent of this eastern dispersion may be inferred from the fact that the greater of the two Jewish Talmuds goes back to Babylonian scribes, one of whom, Hillel, who flourished in the first century before Christ, ranks among the greatest of Jewish teachers.

But the chief voluntary migration of Jews from Palestine dates from the time of Alexander and is one of the significant historical results of his campaign. Whether Jewish soldiers went with Alexander to the East, and whether they formed a part of the population of Alexandria from the very first, are points on which there is doubt; but that they went to Egypt in great numbers in the reign of Ptolemy Lagus and formed a large element of the population of Alexandria is certain. This Egyptian colony is said to have numbered one million in the time of Philo, that is, it was about the size of the present Jewish population in greater New York. West of Alexandria, in Cyrene, the Jews were so numerous that they maintained a synagogue of their own in Jerusalem in the first century, and in the time of Titus there was an uprising among them headed by a certain Jonathan who had two thousand followers. There were so many Jews in Rome in Cicero's lifetime (106–43 B. C.) that in his oration on behalf of Flaccus he spoke as though standing in some fear of their power. At the death of Julius Caesar in 44 B. C. the mourning of the Roman

Jews was so conspicuous as to be mentioned by the historian Suetonius. Tacitus says that in 19 A. D. four thousand Jews, that is, men, were sent off into Sardinia, a statement which implies a Jewish population of three or four times that number. Nor were the Jews of Italy all in Rome. There was a colony in Puteoli at an early day, and the excavations at Pompeii show traces of a Jewish settlement there which, if De Rossi's view that Fabius Eupor who sought the election of Pansa in 51 B. C. was a Pompeiian Jew, must date its origin considerably before that time. That there were numerous Jews in Spain at the middle of the first Christian century seems to follow from the fact that the apostle Paul planned to go thither to preach the gospel, for though he was the Apostle of the Gentiles he always approached them by the way of the synagogue and the proselytes who at this time were sure to be found there. Of the presence of Jews throughout Asia Minor from Antioch on the Orontes to Pontus and from Cappadocia to Ephesus, also in the islands of the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, we have abundant proof in the epistles of the New Testament and in the Book of Acts. In addition to the particular islands mentioned in the New Testament as the abode of Jews, Josephus mentions Cos, Delos, Paros, and Melos.

Thus we see that for the time of Julius Caesar, the language of Philo and Josephus regarding the universality of the dispersion of the Jews is not too strong, and the Jewish Sibyl uses similar language for a time from a half-century to a century earlier. As to the numbers of Jews in different quarters of the Empire it is probable that the language of Philo, though suitable to Egypt, is extreme for other parts, for he says of the Jewish population in the Dispersion that it everywhere appears but little inferior in numbers to the original native population of the country.

When now we ask how far these Jews dwelling outside of Palestine became hellenized before the New Testament era, there are two classes of facts to be taken into account. Whether we go back to the time of Julius Caesar, or the Syrian kings, or the Ptolemies, we find that the Jews who lived abroad, with rare exceptions, remained Jews in religion. Cases of apostacy like that of Tiberius Alexander, or even of intermarriage with Gentiles as in the case of Anileus the Babylonian Jew, seem to have been infrequent. From all parts of

the empire an annual Jewish tribute was sent up to the temple in Jerusalem, and the number of pilgrims who went to the greater feasts, especially that of the Passover, was large. The Jews were not lost to Judaism by their residence abroad. Instead of being absorbed by the pagan religions, they carried on in the Roman period a most zealous and successful propaganda. A traveling merchant, Ananias by name, got access to certain women at the court of Izates, king of Adiabene, east of the upper Tigris, and taught them to worship God according to the Jewish manner; later he persuaded also the king himself, and another Jew won the king's mother, Helena. In Damascus, shortly before the last Jewish war with Rome, there were multitudes of people, especially women, who were attached to Judaism. The treasurer of Candace in distant Ethiopia was doubtless not the only proselyte whom the Jews had won in that southern land, nor Poppaea Sabina, wife of Nero, the only one in Caesar's household who adopted the Jews' religion. In the synagogues of the Dispersion, where Paul preached, there was always a gentile contingent.

Again, if the hellenization of the Jews of the Dispersion was held in check by the proud consciousness of their superiority to the gentiles in morals and religion—a consciousness which contributed not a little to their success as missionaries, it was also hindered, we must suppose, by that hostility which they encountered among the gentiles. Slandorous statements about their history and life together with bloody assaults upon them must have tended to strengthen rather than lessen their aversion to the entire pagan society in which they lived. There is a literature reaching back as far as Manetho in the middle of the third century before Christ which says hard things of the Jews—that they were driven out of Egypt as leprous and unclean, that they had an ass's head of gold in the Holy of Holies, that Antiochus Epiphanes found there a statue of Moses seated on an ass, that about this time they sacrificed a Greek annually in the temple and swore undying hostility toward hellenism, that the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was not different from the Feast of Bacchus, and that the Jews drank on the Sabbath until they were drunk, that their religion was a barbarous superstition and destructive of all the bonds of society—these and similar charges made by reputable gentile authors were not adapted to draw the Jews toward

gentile ways of thought and life. But hostility toward the Jews scattered throughout the empire was not limited in its expression to literary forms. The rulers, indeed, as the Ptolemies, the earlier Seleucidae, and the Roman emperors, were in general favorable toward them. They never tried to destroy them as the Caesars tried to destroy Christianity. The radical policy of Tiberius and Claudius was temporary and ineffectual. But though the Jews were favorably regarded by the successors of Alexander and by the Roman emperors they had to suffer from time to time from outbursts of popular hatred, as, for instance, in Alexandria in the early part of the first century, when fifty thousand were slain, and later in Damascus when ten thousand fell. This pagan hostility toward the Jews, like the hostility of nominally Christian nations toward them in modern times, naturally reacted to increase Jewish exclusiveness.

But although the Jews of the Dispersion remained loyal to their religion and sought to win the gentiles to their way of worship, and although the Greek world, moved by envy at the privileges granted to the Jews, or by their exclusiveness and their contempt for idolatry, often did them evil, nevertheless they were deeply influenced by Greek life and thought, to a large extent no doubt unconsciously influenced, as a mountaineer is influenced by the milder climate and more luxurious life of the lowlands.

There was, first of all, a change of language, and therewith, in course of time, an inevitable change in thought, often slight, almost imperceptible, it may be, yet real. The provincial Aramaic tongue, devoid of great literary associations and ill-adapted to be the vehicle of fine culture or philosophy, was exchanged for the Greek language, which for several centuries was the universal speech, a language flexible and rich in itself, and permeated by the spirit of Sophocles and Plato, of Herodotus and Demosthenes. To acquire this language, as the Jews of the Dispersion in the second and subsequent generations did, whether in Alexandria or Antioch, Seleucia or Corinth or Rome, meant to some extent a change of thought, new points of view, a wider outlook, a manifold aesthetic and intellectual enrichment. A similar result is being produced today for the children and grandchildren of Jewish immigrants from southwestern Russia who take a university training at Columbia or Chicago.

To the Jews of the Dispersion the learning of Greek was a business necessity. If they were to succeed in worldly affairs, they must know the language of the world. In the West at least the Jews dwelt chiefly in the cities, and, entering into almost all the industries and callings of city life, they were in frequent contact with Greek-speaking gentiles. This industrial competition and association with Greeks was another agency by which the Jews were slowly hellenized. Weavers like Aquila and Prisca of Pontus and Paul of Tarsus must have studied the tastes of their patrons; generals like Onias and Dositheus to whom Ptolemy Philometer is said to have committed his whole kingdom are certain to have made a study of Greek strategy and also to have known something of the everyday religious beliefs and superstitions of their Greek soldiers; the money-lenders, merchants, and artisans of Alexandria, in order to compete with the Alexandrians, must have studied Greek character and life; the rabbis of the numerous synagogues of the Dispersion through whose efforts proselytes were made from the various pagan cults, cannot have been ignorant of those cults, or have failed to be influenced in the course of time by the nobler sentiments of Greek religion even as our Christian missionaries to India and China, to Persia and Japan, have had their own views modified by the views which permeate these ancient civilizations; actors like Aliturius of Puteoli in the time of Nero, sorcerers like Bar-Jesus and the sons of Sceva, and even the Jewish beggars of Rome whose entire household furniture was a rude basket containing some hay, could not have succeeded in their several callings without considerable knowledge of their environment, and with this knowledge came an inevitable coloring of their own minds.

But the hellenization of the Jews of the Dispersion prior to the New Testament era is most clearly to be estimated in the case of those who followed a literary calling, and whose works, or some fragments of whose works, have come down to us. In this Jewish-Greek literature, of which the translation of the Old Testament is perhaps the earliest part, and which includes writings historical, poetical, and philosophical, there are two features which in particular claim our attention.

First, the apologetic vein through which we see the desire of these

Jews to commend their sacred books and their history to the Greeks. This implies that they had learned to respect their pagan neighbors, that they had discovered elements of good in them and in their writings.

This apologetic spirit expressed itself chiefly in two ways. It is seen, first, in the glorification of Israel's history and laws. Thus Artabanus, as quoted by Eusebius, said that Abraham brought the science of astrology to the Phoenicians, also that Joseph was the inventor of the science of measuring, that Moses was the teacher of Orpheus and was the same person whom the Greeks called Musaeus, that he was named Hermes by the Egyptians because he interpreted the hieroglyphics, that he was the founder of the Egyptian state, having divided the land into thirty-six nomes, the founder also of the Egyptian religion, and the inventor of many things useful to mankind. Eupolemus made Abraham the inventor of astronomy and teacher of the priests of Egypt. Theodotus, who wrote a poem on the town of Shechem, spoke of Laban as the sole ruler over Syria, and Philo, another poet, made Joseph the king of Egypt. In like manner the poet Ezekiel said of Raguel that he was the sole monarch of Libya. Evidently these writers did not wish the Greeks to think less highly than they ought of the merits and achievements of Israel.

The apologetic spirit of the Jewish-Greek literature is seen also in the naïve assumption that all the truth of the Greek poets and philosophers was borrowed directly or indirectly from Moses and the prophets. It is evident, says the Alexandrian philosopher Aristobulus who flourished about the middle of the second century before Christ, that Plato closely followed the Hebrew legislation, and he supposes that he had done this with the help of a Greek translation of the Law which was prior to the time of Alexander. Pythagoras also, he says, transferred many precepts from Moses into his own system; Homer and Hesiod likewise borrowed from the Hebrew books what they said of the seventh day as holy. It is to be presumed therefore that, in the view of Aristobulus, the law had been translated into Greek before the time of Homer!

We meet with the same conception of the dependence of Greek philosophy on Moses in the writings of Philo, who regarded the Jewish



lawgiver as the perfect philosopher. Thus when the Stoics taught that there are four cardinal virtues, this according to Philo was only a reproduction of what Moses said when he spoke of the four rivers that watered the garden of Eden. Josephus also says that the earliest Greek philosophers, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, and "almost all the rest," in their actions and philosophical doctrines, followed Moses, and shared his notions of the nature of God. He does not directly suggest how these Greeks found out what Moses had taught, but seems to assume that they must have done so inasmuch as Moses was far more ancient than they, and contained all the truth which they have set forth.

This prodigious claim of the Jews, which was later repeated and enlarged by Christian writers, as Clement of Alexandria, and even by the Syrian philosopher Numenius who, as quoted by Clement, declared that Plato was simply Moses speaking in Attic Greek, shows most clearly that they who made it were willing to admit that there was a divine element in the Greek poets and philosophers. They did not rise to the view that the same God who had revealed himself to Moses had spoken also to Pythagoras and Socrates, but they were at least so impressed by the Greek writings that they could not deny a close kinship between them and their own law. Thus, they were to a certain extent hellenized.

But there is a second feature of this Jewish-Greek literature to be noticed. The hellenism of its authors is seen not only in their apology for their law and their history, but also in their interpretation of that law. Thus Aristobulus shows his Greek training when he says that God's "speaking" in Genesis means not words but the "construction of works," and that we see the same usage in Socrates and Plato, who, when contemplating the marvelous arrangement of the universe, say that they hear therein the "voice" of God. Again, the statement that God rested on the seventh day does not mean, says our philosopher, that he henceforth ceased to do anything, but rather that his arrangement of works, now completed, was final for all time. Nor is this all the significance he saw in the word. The seventh day is ordained to be a sign of our seventh faculty, that is, reason, and it is added as further confirmation of his interpretation that the whole world of living creatures revolves in sevens. It is

evident that this Jew was impressed with the Pythagorean doctrine of the mystic value of numbers.

Traces of a hellenizing tendency are apparent even in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Every translation is to some extent an interpretation, and in this particular case the interpretation has a Greek coloring. Thus it was probably under the influence of the exalted conception of God held by the Greek philosophers that certain bold anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament were effaced in the translation. According to the Hebrew, Moses went up to *God* in the Mount (Exod. 19:3); in the Greek, he went up to the *Mount* of God. Again, according to the Hebrew, a slave when manumitted was to be brought to *God* (Exod. 21:6); according to the Greek, he was brought to the *judgment* of God. Such illustrations might be multiplied.

It is probably to be put down to Greek influence that the translators of the Old Testament dropped the covenant name of God, the proper noun "Jehovah," and in its place set the common noun "Lord" (*κύριος*). This was a momentous and far-reaching change, for through the use of the Septuagint by the writers of the New Testament it came about that this Alexandrian modification passed over to Christianity. Now the Greek word which we render "Lord" departs from the Hebrew "Jehovah" in a manner that suggests an approximation to Greek conceptions of God. Thus the Hebrew name was associated with a particular national covenant, but the Greek word on the other hand has no national limitation, and therefore suits the thought which the translators without doubt entertained, viz., that the religion of Israel was for all nations.

Again, the Greek term, unlike the corresponding Hebrew, names God in analogy with human relationships: he is the Lord, the Ruler, the one clothed with absolute authority. We reach him as we rise through a series including heroes, kings, demi-gods, and gods, somewhat as one approached the august majesty of an Alexander or a Cyrus. But the Hebrew word, if we define it by the dealing of God with Israel through the centuries, does not suggest a ruler after the order of earthly rulers, only higher and more powerful, and if we define it by the passage in Exodus, it seems to carry our thought away from man to that which is eternal and unchanging. The

God who revealed himself to Moses impressed him with the thought that his purpose—which the context shows to have been a gracious one—was above the mutations of time. The translators in dropping the covenant name lost this thought, and gave in its stead a term which any Greek might have used concerning any one of the gods of Olympus.

But the most extensive illustration of this hellenizing interpretation of the Old Testament is of course furnished by the works of Philo. Here we see Moses teaching the Platonic psychology and cosmology, the ethics of the Stoics and the elaborate Pythagorean doctrine of numbers. He is thought to have anticipated Plato's theory of ideas and the pre-existence of the soul. The demons and heroes of the Greeks are what Moses calls angels. The Greek doctrine of the Logos or Divine Reason, modified by Jewish speculation, is found by Philo in the Pentateuch. There was really no limit to the amount of Greek thought which could be quietly educed from the words of the Hebrew writings. The wonder was wrought by the use of a Greek mode of interpretation, that of allegory. The simple assumption that words have a second and mysterious sense which is to be obtained only by the ingenuity of the skilled interpreter was all that was needed in order to make the plainest of historical narratives, statistical and chronological statements, or even proper names, yield an endless wealth of profound thought. This assumption was made by Philo, not as something new but as an established and unquestionable dogma. With this mode of interpretation we have to associate, as a part of Philo's Greek equipment for the study of the Old Testament, his idea of inspiration. That the inspired person is in a state of frenzy, where the reason has little or nothing to do and the soul, unconscious of itself, is struck by the divine voice as a musical instrument by the hand of the player—this is an idea which Philo had absorbed from his Greek environment, not received from his forefathers.

The hellenization of the scattered Jews which we have now sketched reacted on the homeland. It is impossible to say concerning the hellenism of Palestine at any particular time how much of it was due to the presence of Greeks in the country and how much to the influence of those multitudes of Jews who dwelt abroad but who maintained

both a material and spiritual connection with Jerusalem. It is probable however that the latter influence far outweighed the former, that the hellenized Jews from Alexandria and Ephesus and other great cities, by their presence in Palestine and by their writings, did much more for the introduction of Greek thought among their countrymen than was done by the Greeks themselves who dwelt within the borders of the land.

These Greek-speaking Jews from abroad maintained their own synagogues in Jerusalem, and every such synagogue must have been a center of hellenistic influence for the Jews of the capital and to a less degree for Jews from the country who visited the temple at the great feasts. Alexandrians like Philo and the author of *Wisdom* could hardly have visited Jerusalem without leaving an impress of their broadened faith. And as these Jews of the Dispersion came back to Palestine, so must their writings also have come and must have exerted a leavening influence among those who were able to read Greek. In the case of the Septuagint we have evidence that it not only made its way to the home-land, but that it was widely used there. Palestinians like Peter, John Mark, and Matthew cited the Old Testament according to the Greek version, even when this departed perceptibly from the sense of the original.

In the *Wisdom* of Solomon also we see how a Jew, while still loyal, as he thought, to his religion, could be deeply influenced by Greek ideas. This book, so highly estimated in antiquity that it was made a part of the Greek Old Testament, seems to belong to the first century before Christ, and may have been composed in Alexandria. The author, like the translators of the Old Testament, departed from the idea of creation found in Genesis, and thought of the world as fashioned out of a formless pre-existing mass, thus agreeing with Plato. Akin to Plato's is also his view of the soul, which existed before it came into a body of flesh and to which this body is both a prison and a cause of sin. In agreement with the Stoics, the author thinks of the spirit of wisdom as permeating and inhabiting all things, and he knows of four cardinal virtues.

There is one other evidence of hellenization in Palestine—whether due to inner or outward influences, or to both, we cannot say—to which thus far we have made no reference. This is the party of the

Sadducees. They come into the light and into prominence in the latter part of the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-104 B. C.), they are mentioned by Josephus as having existed in the time of Jonathan (153-142 B. C.), and it may be conjectured that they existed, not as a party, but rather as a tendency, from a time long before the rise of the Hasmoneans. Less numerous than the Pharisees, who also appeared in the time of Hyrcanus, they were of higher dignity and were successful in persuading the rich to be of their way of thinking. But what we are here concerned to say of the Sadducees is that they were friendly to Greek civilization. Thus they rejected all those practices, sanctioned by tradition, which isolated the Jews from other people. They made a virtue of independence in thought, and here also seem to betray the influence of the Greeks. They were in favor with Aristobulus, son of the illustrious Hyrcanus, who was called a friend of the Greeks, and they filled the office of high-priest in the reign of Herod the Great who did more than any other ruler to introduce Greek customs into Palestine. But no high-priest in Herod's time or under the Roman procurators commands our respect. They were rich and worldly, ready to feign themselves Pharisees in belief in order to gain their ends. We may then regard the Sadducees as having appropriated the grosser elements of Greek civilization, while men like Philo and the author of *Wisdom* appropriated its spiritual elements. They were hellenized, but apparently not unto their own highest good.

Before leaving this subject of the reaction of Jewish thought, as found in the Dispersion, upon the thought of Palestinian Jews it should be said that, for at least a century before the composition of the earliest New Testament writing, the Jews of the Dispersion were quite as influential a body, quite as important for the development of Christianity, as those of Palestine. The Jews of Alexandria, says Mommsen, were equal to those of Jerusalem in numbers and wealth, in intellect and organization, and when we add to these the great colonies in the East, which were so widely represented at the Passover when Jesus was crucified, also the colonies in Cyrene and Rome and the numerous rich colonies in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and the islands of the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, we may well believe that the scattered Jews, in their totality, were fully equal

in numbers and wealth to the entire Jewish population of Palestine, while among them there were undoubtedly far more who had been deeply and permanently influenced by Greek civilization than there were in the home-land.

Alexander the Great, we remark in conclusion, inasmuch as he broke down the barrier between Greeks and barbarians and made his campaign of military conquest a campaign of Greek civilization, set in motion a current of hellenism which, through the medium of the Jews and then of the New Testament, still flows on in Christian thought.

*Sources.*—Agatharchides, second cent. B. C.; Alexander Polyhistor, 80-40 B. C.; Aristeas, Epistle of, 200 B. C.; Aristobulus, 170-150 B. C.; Artapanus, first cent., B. C. (?); Berosus, *ca.* 280 B. C.; Chaeremon of Alexandria, first cent. A. D.; Cicero, 106-43 B. C.; Clearchus of Soli, third cent., B. C.; Diodorus Siculus, first cent., B. C.; Eupolemus, *ca.* 150 B. C.; Eusebius, 264-340 A. D.; Hecataeus of Abdera, *ca.* 330-290 B. C.; Hermippus Callimachus, third cent., B. C.; Horace, 65-8 B. C.; Jesus Sirach, second cent., B. C.; Josephus, 37-100 A. D.; Justin, second cent., A. D. (?); Juvenal, *ca.* 100-125 A. D.; Luke, 50-100 A. D.; Maccabees (I-II), *ca.* 100 B. C.-50 A. D.; Manetho, third cent., B. C.; Mnaseas of Patara, third cent., B. C.; Nicolas of Damascus, *ca.* 6 A. D.; Philo, first cent., A. D.; Pliny, 23-79 A. D.; Plutarch, 50-120 A. D.; Polybius, 204-122 B. C.; Posidonius, *ca.* 100 B. C.; Quintilian, 35-100 A. D. (?); *Septuagint*, *ca.* 283-132 B. C.; *Sibylline Oracles*, second cent., B. C.; Strabo, 63 B. C.-21 A. D. (?); Suetonius, first cent., A. D.; Tacitus, *ca.* 61-117 A. D.